



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE **Alumni Report**

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE,
MCGUIRE AFB RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE

Winter 2009-2010

McGuire AFB
Mon thru Fri
0900-1500
609 754-2459

DSC Philadelphia
Tue, Wed, Thu
0900-1500
215 737-7300

Stewart ANG Base
Mon thru Fri 0900-1200
1300-1600
845 563-2226

Willow Grove AFRES
Mon thru Fri
0900-1500
215 443-1072

Wyoming, PA
Mon 0900-1500
570 288-1947 x220

RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY 2010

This important day for military retirees and their families has been set for April 24, 2010 which is the last Saturday in April. We will have a program especially organized for our retiree community. We will be in a different facility in 2010. It is the newly renovated McGuire Community Center. This is the former Officers Club where we have had many previous Retiree Appreciation Days. **MARK YOUR CALENDAR!** We will have details in our Spring 2010 newsletter.

MILITARY RETIRED PAY EXCLUDED FROM NEW JERSEY STATE INCOME TAX

We get many calls about this exclusion every year. **DO NOT INCLUDE YOUR MILITARY RETIRED PAY IN YOUR NEW JERSEY INCOME TAX RETURN!** The law has been in effect for many years now. If you do your own return, remember the exclusion. Also, for those that have someone prepare your NJ State income tax return, remind your preparer. Otherwise, you might be paying tax on income that is excluded. If you have questions, please call us at the Retiree Activities Office. This law also applies to Survivor Benefits.



ARMY & AIR FORCE EXCHANGE SERVICE (AAFES) STAR CARD FUEL DISCOUNT

AAFES is continuing its **FUEL DISCOUNT PROGRAM FOR USERS OF THE MILITARY "STAR CARD."** The current discount at the AAFES fuel pump is five cents a gallon every time you pump fuel and pay with the "Star Card." In addition

there are steeper discounts at various times during the year. The discount was 11 cents per gallon on Veterans Day, Nov 11, and from Nov 30 to Dec 4 the discount increased to 20 cents per gallon. In continuing the 20 cents per gallon discount, it will be available again from Dec 28 through Jan 1.

AUTOMOBILE DECALS FOR BASE ENTRY

McGuire AFB and Ft. Dix no longer issue the automobile decals. You must show your ID card to the gate guard as you enter the base. Entry requirements have changed. If you have questions about base entry, please call the security entry office at 609 754-3938. With the implementation of the Joint Base organization, the operations of the security forces at both McGuire AFB and Ft. Dix are under command of the 87th Security Forces Squadron.

KEEP YOUR DEFENSE ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY REPORTING SYSTEM (DEERS) RECORDS UP TO DATE

Life events such as moving, death, divorce or simply having a child go off to college are milestone in family lives that require DEERS updates. Keeping your DEERS records current means uninterrupted

access to the TRICARE health system. DEERS is the worldwide computer data base of uniformed service members, sponsors, military retirees, their family members and others eligible for military benefits. Mistakes or outdated information in DEERS can cause problems with a TRICARE beneficiary's claims. For example, retail network pharmacies check TRICARE eligibility through DEERS, and prescriptions are filled only for beneficiaries listed as DEERS eligible. Your DEERS data can be updated in several different ways, which include: in person at a military ID card issuing facility, online, and by phone, fax or mail. Beneficiaries can contact DEERS at 800 538-9552 if you have questions. The McGuire RAO has a listing of the nearby ID card issuing facilities in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York State.



MCGUIRE CLINIC RETIREE ANCILLARY SERVICES

The McGuire Medical Clinic, operated by the 87th Medical Group, can provide specific ancillary services for retirees not enrolled at the clinic for their primary care. These include pharmacy, laboratory, radiology, immunization and Health and Wellness Center (HAWC).

- For **pharmacy**, normal hours, phone 609 754-9570, prescriptions refill 609 754-9470 or 888 223-2448.

- For **laboratory**, normal hours, phone 609 754-9091

- For **radiology**, normal hours, phone 609 754-9523

- For **immunization**, hours 0730 to 1500, phone 609 754-9209

- For **Health and Wellness Center**, normal hours, located at the Fitness Center, phone 609 754-2462

NO EMERGENCY SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE AT THE MCGUIRE CLINIC

Normal hours of operation are from 0730 to 1630. The Clinic is closed on Saturday, Sunday and all Federal holidays and from 0730 to 1030 on the first Friday of the month. Clinic telephone numbers are: 609 754-9200 or 888 223-2448. The Clinic appointment line is 866 377-2778. Appointments are available for TRICARE Prime beneficiaries only. Health benefits advisors can be reached at 609 754-9082 and 609 754-9083. After-hours walk-in service is available

FOR TRICARE PRIME BENEFICIARIES ONLY AS FOLLOWS:

Monday thru Thursday 1630 to 2100; Friday, 1630 to 2000; Saturday, 0830 to 1330; Sunday 1100 to 1600; holidays 1100 to 1500. For other detailed information call the Clinic numbers during normal duty hours.

For additional information and assistance:

- TRICARE North Region Contractor, 877 874-2273 or www.healthnetfederalservices.com (this is our region)
- TRICARE South Region Contractor, 800 444-5445 or www.humana-military.com
- TRICARE West Region Contractor, 888 874-9378 or www.triwest.com
- TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy program, 877 363-1303
- TRICARE Retail Pharmacy program, 877 363-1303
- TRICARE Retiree Dental program 888 838-8737
- TRICARE for Life, 866 773-0404



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS (VA) PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

For this issue of our newsletter, we have several recent Veterans' topics that will be included under this subject heading.

Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit program. This benefit (*applies to Pennsylvania Residents only*) is only 15 months old many veterans of this conflict have not yet applied. Veterans must submit an application requesting compensation from this program. The application must include military documents. Any individual in the U.S. Armed Forces, Reserve component or National Guard that served in the Persian Gulf during the period of August 2, 1990 through August 31, 1991 may be eligible. Eligible individuals qualify for a one-time lump sum payment of \$75 per month (maximum of \$525) for the greater portion of each month of the active service in the theater. The deadline for applying is August 31, 2015.

VA is creating 28 new veterans' centers. The VA has announced that combat veterans will receive readjustment counseling and other assistance in 28 additional communities across the country where the Department of Veterans' Affairs will establish new centers in 2010. These 28 new centers will be established in 20 states. There are already 232 centers throughout the states. The veteran's center program was established in 1979 by Congress, recognizing that many Vietnam veterans were still having readjustment problems. In 2008, the program provided more than 1.1 million visits to over 167,000 veterans. For more information about the centers go to www.vetcenter.va.gov/index.asp.

Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) increased. The VA has announced the addition of four new Veterans Law Judges to the BVA. The BVA is an appeals body to which veterans, their dependents or their survivors can go when they are not satisfied with decisions about claims. The BVA reviews decisions on benefit claims made by local VA offices and issues decisions on appeals. These law judges are attorneys experienced in veterans' law. They are the only ones who can issue BVA decisions. The Board currently has 60 Veterans Law Judges. The BVA handled 48,804 cases in fiscal year 2009. They are assisted by staff attorneys, also trained in veterans law. Most of the cases involve claims for disability compensation and pensions.

Dept of Veterans' Affairs extends "Agent Orange" benefits. Relying on an independent study by the Institute of Medicine, the VA decided to establish a service connection for Vietnam veterans with three specific illnesses based on the latest evidence of an association with the herbicides referred to as Agent Orange. The illnesses affected by the recent decision are **Parkinson's disease, ischemic heart disease and B-cell leukemia's such as hairy-cell leukemia.** In practical terms, veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have a "presumed" illness do not have to prove an association between their illnesses and their military service. This "presumption" simplifies and

speeds up the application process for benefits, according to VA officials. The recent decision brings the number of presumed illnesses to 15 recognized by the VA. The 12 previously recognized illnesses are: acute and sub acute transient peripheral neuropathy, amyloidosis, chloracne, chronic lymphocytic leukemia, diabetes mellitus (type 2), Hodgkin's disease, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, porphyria cutanea tarda, prostate cancer, respiratory cancers, soft tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma).

U.S. Veterans' Affairs staffs' office for survivors of veterans. To strengthen programs for survivors of veterans and service members, the VA has staffed an office to serve as their advocate. The office serves as the primary adviser to the Secretary on all issues affecting the survivors and dependents of deceased veterans and service members. It will monitor VA's delivery of benefits to survivors, make appropriate referrals to VA offices for survivors seeking benefits and explore innovative ways of reaching survivors who are not receiving the VA benefits for which they are eligible. The establishment of this office was authorized in the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2008. For more information, call 800 827-1000 or visit the VA web site at www.va.gov.

SPECIAL NOTE: If you need more information on any of these programs described above check with your local VA office. Our RAO does not have the capability to answer detailed questions.



THINK INCOME TAXES

With the end of the year very close, now is the time to start thinking about your 2009 income tax return.

If you are looking to decrease your tax burden for 2009, you will likely need to evaluate potential deductions and credits before December 31, 2009. Income tax specialists

recommend you meet with your accountant or income tax preparer as soon as possible. This is recommended because of the complexities of tax credits and difficulty of interpreting the tax codes. The experts offer these tips for reducing your 2009 tax burden: a. Report losses on any taxable accounts (aside from retirement accounts) you have; b. Take advantage of tax-deferred retirement plans; c. If appropriate, take advantage of setting up and/or contributing to a tax-free health savings account, as those are likely to be going away in the coming years; d. If you have taken on a new job in retirement and moved as a result, you might be able to deduct moving expenses. (Printed, courtesy of MOAA).

Remember, there are no COLAs projected for the year 2010.

AIR MOBILITY COMMAND (AMC) WEB SITE OFFERS SPACE-AVAILABLE TRAVEL INFO

People planning to travel the AMC military travel system can now go to www.amc.af.mil/amctravel/index.asp for the latest AMC travel information. The site that went live earlier this year offers prospective space-available travelers a wealth of information, including an updated AMC passenger terminal contact list (complete with phone, email and web links) and more than a dozen travel documents, example letters and brochures. Under the AMC travel program, unused seats on U.S. military and military contract aircraft are made available to non-duty passengers on a space-available basis. The AMC travel site is updated with the latest travel news and information. Space-available travel is not guaranteed. Passengers need to be prepared for their Space A trip to take a little more

time than a reserved commercial flight. The most important thing to remember when traveling Space A is to be prepared to fly commercial if problems are encountered. Having a plan and enough money for contingencies is the key for a stress-free trip.



C-141 MEMORIAL PAVERS STILL AVAILABLE THROUGH MAJOR T.B. MCGUIRE FOUNDATION

Though the C-141 Memorial was dedicated on Veterans' Day 2008, memorial pavers are still being offered for \$50 and \$100. To obtain a paver

form, go to tbmcguirefoundation.org and follow the links to the forms. Print out and send with check to the address on the form. Or contact Art Covello at 609 654-2236. You will have a long-term remembrance.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We have a continuing need for volunteers in all of our RAO operations. You can help yourself and your retired community by volunteering your time with as little as three hours a week. You choose the hours and day. Contact our office at McGuire AFB: at 609 754-2459 or email us at mcgrao@mcguire.af.mil.

C-118 DISPLAY AIRCRAFT REFURBISHMENT

The C-118 displayed on the McGuire AFB passenger terminal traffic circle has been moved to hangar 3209 (Big Beige) for refurbishment. The project manager is soliciting volunteers who may be interested in helping. The aircraft will be returned to its original livery and tail number (the aircraft had been in the possession of the Navy for several years). Any and all volunteers are welcome. For further information or to volunteer, please contact SMSgt Christopher Hofrichter at 609 754-2773 or email christopher.hofrichter@mcguire.af.mil

DESIGNATING A BENEFICIARY FOR ARREARS OF PAY (AOP)

AOP includes all unencumbered amounts owed to a deceased military retiree. Military retirees earn retired pay each day until they die and have the ability to leave the unencumbered amount to anyone they choose. Unfortunately, some retirees never choose or update their choice and allow the pay to go to someone they might not have wanted. At a recent conference, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) indicated many retirees do not have a current beneficiary for their AOP. (The Army had the highest percentage of up-to-date beneficiaries, at just less than 80 %.) If you don't declare a beneficiary, AOP is paid according to the Order of Precedence. This precedence would pay as follows: 1. A beneficiary designated in writing, if received by DFAS before death; 2. A surviving spouse; 3. children and their descendants; 4. Parents; 5. A legal representative; 6. A person entitled under the law of domicile of the deceased retiree. (Printed, courtesy of the Military Officers Association of America, MOAA)

PERSONAL DATA ERRORS

We have received feedback from retirees and surviving spouses about missing checks, failed direct deposits, incorrect addresses, and other personal data. It is an individual responsibility to keep your data up to date. Updating your data through DEERS only when you get a new ID card does not update your pay records at DFAS. You must call DFAS at 800 321-1080 or write them at **Defense Finance and Accounting Service, U.S. Military Retirement Pay, P.O. Box 7130, London, KY 40742-7130** to correct personal data errors concerning marital status, mailing address, direct deposit information, SBP coverage, beneficiary information, etc. Call the RAO if you need help.

GETTING YOUR FLU SHOT

The H1N1 flu has been in the headlines this year. However, it is still important to get your seasonal flu shot. It is important to get a shot every year, because the vaccine is tailored to prevent the most common flu strains, which change each year. The seasonal flu vaccine is recommended especially for those at high risk of complications from the flu—children, people over age 50, pregnant women, people with certain chronic illnesses, those living in long term care facilities and those who live with or care for people who have the flu or are at high risk for it. Seasonal flu and H1N1 have many similarities; both present similar symptoms, including fever, headache, lethargy, dry cough, sore throat, runny nose, and muscle aches. The incubation period for both flus is one to four days and spread from person to person, especially through coughing and sneezing. People with H1N1 more often experience nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. A vaccination for one flu type will not prevent you from getting sick with the other. Prevention measures are the same; wash hands thoroughly and often, dispose of dirty tissues, and cover all coughs and sneezes. If you get sick, stay home and stay away from others. For questions on H1N1 (swine flu) call the New Jersey flu hot line at 866 321-9571.



Reminder from the McGuire Clinic: There must be at least 28 days between live, seasonal flu vaccine (flu mist) and the live, H1N1 intranasal mist vaccine. The two live vaccines CANNOT be given on the same day.

SPECIAL EVENTS

"Tops in Blue" Entertains

"Tops in Blue" has a rich history of "family entertaining family" and is being brought to JBMDL Timmerman Center, Dix annex on Thursday, February 11 in honor of the Year of the Military Family. The show is free and starts at 7 p.m. For details, call 609-754-2830.

An Award-Winning fete

It's time for the Academy Awards and Club Dix is rolling out the red carpet for an Oscar Party to see the stars on their big night in Hollywood. Come to Club Dix on Friday, March 5 for this star-studded evening that starts at 7 p.m. with wine and prime rib dinner served in grand style followed by the televised awards program. Dress up as your favorite celebrity or be a star and dress up in your glitziest finest. The cost is \$25 per person and advance reservations are required by calling Club Dix at 609-723-3272.

Leisure & Travel Show slated

NJ Armed Forces Leisure & Travel Show March 22nd from 11am-1pm in the Tommy B's Community Activity Center, McGuire Annex Bldg 2705. Free and open to all eligible base patrons, representatives from the leisure and travel industry will be on hand to provide the latest recreation, travel and leisure information, pricing, etc. Event will include door prizes and giveaways. Call 562-4208 for details.

At your service 24 hours a day, seven days a week

The Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst 87FSS now offers much more to do with lots more ways to do it. You can find out what opportunities await you anytime online at www.gomdl.com.

Retiree Hats, Jackets and T-Shirts

Please note the additional costs for shipping that Ron has had to apply because of rising cost of goods and mailing. All products carry the embroidered retiree logo. Note the new design and material of the jacket and that a very nice pima cotton golf shirt is now available for \$25.00 plus \$3.00 shipping. T-shirts are dark blue. Sizes are L, XL and XXL. Prices are \$13.50 and \$14.50 for the XXL; material is 50% cotton and 50% nylon. Add \$3.00 for shipping. Hats are dark blue adjustable. Summer and winter weights are available. Summer hats are \$14.00, winter hats are \$15.00. Add \$2.00 for shipping if ordering two or more. The design and material of the jacket have changed. The material is now a microfiber with a suede-like finish. Color is still dark blue. The entire jacket, including collar, cuffs and waistband, is the same microfiber material with a zipper closing. Jackets are \$43.50; XXL is \$44.50; add \$3.95 for shipping. Allow six weeks for delivery. Make checks payable to Ron Koenig and mail your order to him at 320 Red Point Drive, Smithfield, VA 23430, or call Ron at 609 466-1008 (cell phone). See Ron's web site at www.retiredairforcehats.com.

Air Force Retired Decal

Increasing costs over the past few years have necessitated a minimal increase in price to **\$2.00** each. This is a quality product and we will continue to keep the price as low as possible. We have decals available in any number you may need. The size is 3"x5". And it's red, white and blue. The design is similar to the insignia seen on Army Air Force aircraft at the beginning of WWII, with "Air Force Retired" printed across the top. Cost of the decal is **\$2.00 each**. Send your

order to the **Retiree Activities Office, 87 FSS/CVR 2916 Falcon Lane, McGuire AFB NJ 08641-5004**.

USAF Retired Automobile License

Plate- New Jersey. This special license plate is now available in your own personalized choice. Members of the NJ retired community may still apply for our basic organizational design with the USAF coat of arms and words USAF RETIRED. In addition, our organizational plate can be issued in combination with a PERSONALIZED set from three to five letters and/or numbers, or as a COURTESY plate with a State Senator-approved letter/number sequence. The fees for these plates vary depending on your selected combination! To get instructions and application forms, send a **SELF-ADDRESSED, STAMPED BUSINESS-SIZE ENVELOPE** to **Retiree Activities Office, 87 FSS/CVR, 2916 Falcon Lane, McGuire AFB NJ 08641-5004**. And PLEASE tell us which plate or combination you will be requesting! The instructions will include the plate cost and any limitations.

IMPORTANT McGUIRE INFORMATION

DISCLAIMER: Opinions expressed by the writers of this newsletter are their own and should not be construed to be the official position or policy of DOD, USAF, or McGuire Air Force Base. Editorial efforts have been made to assure the accuracy of the information presented; however, no absolute guarantee can be given or assumed. The Editor.